



COALITION FOR SMARTER GROWTH

Testimony to reserve support pending amendments for

House Bill 1001
Constitutional Amendment
Transportation Trust Fund – Financing – use of Funds

Before the Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Delegate, Sheila E. Hixson, Chair
House Office Building, Room 131
March 1, 2011

by Cheryl Cort
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Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. Our organization works to ensure that transportation and development decisions in the Washington, D.C., region, including the Maryland suburbs, accommodate growth while revitalizing communities, providing more housing and travel choices, and conserving our natural and historic areas.

Our position on HB 1001 is derived first from the Transportation for Maryland principles which call for smarter investments of our limited transportation funds. We believe that before we can ask Marylanders to pay more, we must ensure that we know our money will be used wisely. The proposed bill does not address how proposed increased revenues will be used. We need assurance that the new funding will be used to meet the state's most urgent needs such as maintenance and support smart growth outcomes. Simply putting more towards money the existing list of transportation projects will not achieve this goal, nor will we ever have unlimited money to maintain our existing transportation system and build new facilities to support our community and economic development objectives. We must choose wisely. Before we would support the proposed revenue increase for the Transportation Trust Fund, we need to know:

- What is the maintenance funding shortfall for existing roads, structurally deficient bridges, and transit facilities?
- In particular, what are the maintenance, repair and replacement needs for our local and commuter bus services, MARC, WMATA and MTA rail and bus services?
- How do we ensure that new revenues are allocated first to fully funding these existing maintenance backlogs?
- How do we ensure that we are restoring local transportation funding and that we will meet first local maintenance and safety needs – including pedestrian/bicycle safety -- rather than new capacity?

- How will the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), and in the Washington region, the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) projects be re-evaluated to assess which ones meet the need to maintain existing facilities in good condition, and if new or expanded capacity, increased transportation choices, community revitalization, affordability, and energy savings.

The CTP and CLRP include a wide array of road expansion projects. The CTP also contains two critical new transit projects – the Purple Line in the Washington area, and the Red line in Baltimore. Not on the list is the MARC Growth and Investment Plan. The Purple Line and Red Line are large scale projects dependent on major funding commitments both from the federal government and the state. There's no guarantee that these projects will be funded, especially if Congress cuts transit funding. Would this mean that increased funding to the Transportation Trust Fund would go largely to road expansions and not to these priority transit projects? Also, the MARC growth plan isn't even in the CTP. Would a revenue increase simply go to the long list of road widenings and new interchanges, and not support smart growth for our towns and cities, and transit-oriented development?

Given the importance of the Purple Line, the Red Line, and MARC Growth Plan, we should see these projects receive the same level of special treatment given to the InterCounty Connector (ICC). The ICC relied on a comprehensive package of toll revenues, GARVEE bonds, the general fund and Transportation Trust Fund dollars to finance this approximately \$3 billion project. We should ensure a similar effort for these three transit projects that offer a much broader benefit to Maryland, and support our smart growth goals.

We can support an increase in revenues only if this bill is amended to ensure our investments will first fully fund our maintenance needs for roads, bridges and transit facilities, and second support projects that achieve smart growth outcomes. Transportation investments that support smart growth outcomes focus growth in existing towns, cities and transit stations. These investments provide workers and residents with greater transportation choices, increased affordability, reduced energy consumption and pollution emissions, stronger multimodal connections between housing and jobs, and in particular, expanded transit services.

We ask the committee to request that MDOT to provide answers to the questions we have posed. We also ask the committee to amend the bill to address these issues before a favorable report on the bill.

Thank you for your consideration.